

FACTSHEET

This fact sheet is for educational purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for your child.

Atenolol Treatment for Haemangioma

Why has my doctor recommended atenolol?

Haemangiomas are common birthmarks caused by an overgrowth of the cells that line blood vessels (arteries and veins).

Atenolol is used to stop the growth and reduce the size of haemangiomas.

How does atenolol work?

Atenolol is a drug called a beta-blocker. These drugs slow the heart and shrink blood vessels. We use them for heart and blood pressure problems. We think it's this effect on blood vessels that helps shrink haemangiomas.

Are there any risks for my child?

At the low doses we use, atenolol is usually easy to take. Sometimes it can cause a slow heart, low blood pressure, low sugar in the blood, cold fingers and toes, problems with breathing (wheezing and coughing), sleeping problems and tiredness.

If your child is very sleepy, upset or floppy or has breathing problems, call your doctor or the emergency department. If your child is very unwell, call 000. If you have any other worries about your child while they are on atenolol, please talk to your doctor.

Will my child need to be in hospital to start atenolol treatment?

- If your baby is very young or is at risk of side effects from atenolol, then treatment may be started with your baby in hospital. Your doctor will discuss this with you.
- All other children will begin treatment in the clinic as an outpatient.
- Any subsequent change in dose depends on your doctors' advice.
- Your child's heart rate, blood pressure and blood sugar will be monitored during the initiation. This is a safety measure to see how your child reacts to atenolol.

How is atenolol given?

- Atenolol comes as a liquid which must be measured using the syringe provided.
- Atenolol is usually given as a single daily dose following the first feed or meal in the morning.

Where do I get atenolol?

- Your child's prescription can be filled at your regular pharmacy. You might need to ask the pharmacist to get it in for you.

What can I do to minimise side effects of atenolol?

- Always give atenolol after a feed or meal first thing in the morning.
- Missed doses:
 - If it is less than six hours since your child missed their dose, give it as soon as you remember with a feed or meal, and then go back to normal dosing the following day.
 - If it is over six hours since your child's last dose, skip the dose they missed and give the next dose when you would normally.
 - **Do not** give a double dose to make up for the dose they missed.
- Whenever your child sees a doctor, and for whatever reason, always tell them your child is on atenolol.
- Get your child checked straight away if they are drowsy or hard to wake.

What if I accidentally give too much atenolol?

- If your child is hard to wake or is having trouble breathing, call 000 immediately.
- Even if your child has no obvious symptoms, you should still contact the Poisons Information Centre (131126) to discuss the dose you believe your child has taken.

Can my child take other medications while taking atenolol?

- Always talk to your doctor or pharmacist before giving your child other medication as atenolol may react with other medications.
- Panadol (paracetamol) is safe to give with atenolol.

What do I do if I think my child is having a reaction to atenolol?

- If your child is hard to wake or is having trouble breathing, call 000 immediately.
- If your child is experiencing mild reactions or you are concerned regarding the treatment, please contact the hospital to discuss your concerns.

How often will I need to come to clinic while my child is taking atenolol?

- At the start your child will need to come to the clinic either fortnightly or monthly until the dose is stable.

How long will my child need to take atenolol?

- The average length of treatment is between six and twelve months.
- Your child's dose of atenolol may increase during this time as they grow and their weight increases.

What happens if my child's haemangioma is not going away with atenolol treatment?

- Your doctor will talk to you about other options for treatment.

Who do I call if I have a problem?

- During office hours call the doctor who has ordered the use of this medication for your child.
- Outside office hours, visit your local emergency department.
- This includes if your child vomits.

Additional information

Haemangiomas of Infancy Parent Fact Sheet available on the HNEkidshealth website http://www.hnekidshealth.nsw.gov.au/site/content.cfm?page_id=680584¤t_category_code=16117

This fact sheet contains general information. Talking with your doctor is advised. If you have questions, please talk to your GP or the treating doctor.

If you would like to provide feedback on this fact sheet, please visit our contact page: <http://www.hnekidshealth.nsw.gov.au/site/index.cfm?display=335704>